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Stereocontrolled Synthesis of Adjacent Acyclic Quaternary-Tertiary Motifs and its Application to a Concise Total Synthesis of (–)-Filiformin**

Daniel J. Blair, Catherine J. Fletcher, Katherine M. P. Wheelhouse[§] and Varinder K. Aggarwal*

Abstract: Lithiation-borylation methodology has been developed for the synthesis of acyclic quaternary-tertiary motifs with full control of relative and absolute stereochemistry leading to all four possible isomers of a stereodiad. A novel intramolecular Zweifel-type olefination enabled acyclic stereocontrol to be transformed into cyclic stereocontrol. These key steps have been applied to the shortest enantioselective synthesis of (–)-filiformin to date (9 steps) with full stereocontrol.

Natural products containing quaternary stereogenic centers flanked by additional stereogenic centers, often embedded in fused or bridged ring systems are ubiquitous in nature (Figure 1). Their varied structures and complexity have stimulated a range of synthetic strategies for their synthesis.^[1] A common strategy in many syntheses is to initially construct the ring(s) and then to use the ring system to control stereochemistry around its periphery. Whilst often efficient, this strategy can be limiting as it is based on substrate control. A potentially more flexible, but under-utilized strategy involves constructing an acyclic molecule with control of stereochemistry through reagent control and then to build the ring afterwards. In this way, stereocontrol can be essentially dialled in. However, whilst acyclic stereocontrol can be straightforward for many substrates, for molecules bearing quaternary-tertiary motifs this poses a considerable synthetic challenge.

Our recent methodology for acyclic stereocontrol^[2] involves the reaction of primary/secondary lithiated carbamates with boronic esters and its potential strategic application in the synthesis of cyclic quaternary-tertiary motifs is illustrated in Scheme 1. In this strategy

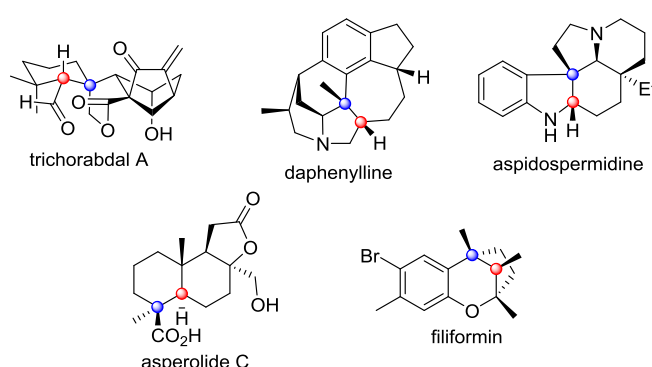
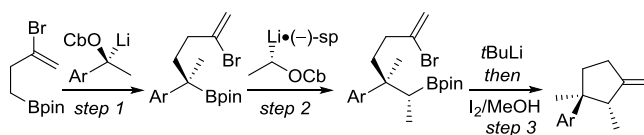


Figure 1. Natural products featuring adjacent quaternary-tertiary stereocenters.

we proposed to carry out sequential homologations with a secondary carbamate (step 1)^[3] followed by a primary carbamate (step 2)^[4] in order to construct quaternary-tertiary boronic esters. We then proposed to carry out an intramolecular Zweifel-type olefination^[5] reaction (step 3) to construct the ring. Steps 2, and 3, which are key to this strategy, had not been previously reported. In this paper we describe our success in developing these reactions and applying them to a short, stereocontrolled synthesis of (–)-filiformin.



Scheme 1. Proposed route to all-carbon quaternary stereocenters with adjacent stereocenters. Cb = CON(*i*Pr)₂pin = pinacolato (–)-sp = (–)-sparteine.

Our initial studies began with the homologation of tertiary boronic ester *rac*-1 with lithiated carbamate *rac*-2 which was generated by deprotonation of ethyl carbamate with *s*BuLi at –78 °C in the presence of TMEDA (Scheme 2a). After oxidation *rac*-3 was isolated in 53% yield and 2:1 *dr* showing that there were no appreciable matched/mismatched effects.

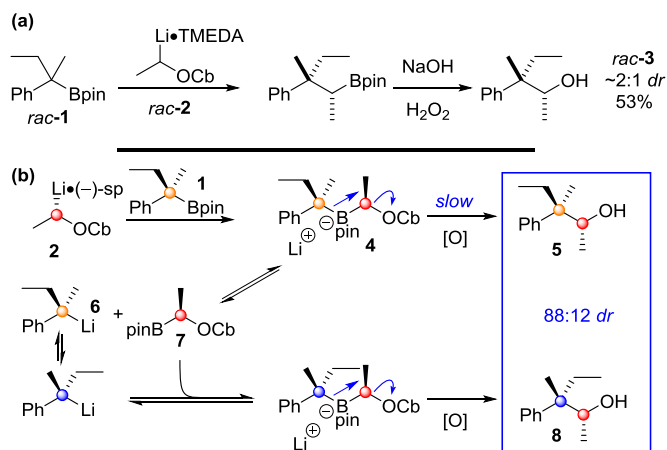
[*] D. J. Blair, Dr. C. J. Fletcher, Prof. Dr. V. K. Aggarwal
School of Chemistry
University of Bristol
Cantock's Close, Bristol, BS8 1TS
Fax: (+44)117 925 1295
E-mail: v.aggarwal@bristol.ac.uk

[[§]] Dr. K. M. P. Wheelhouse
GlaxoSmithKline UK Ltd
Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2NY, UK

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Scheme 2. (a) Racemic homologation of *rac*-1 (b) Homologation of **1** with enantioenriched reaction partners and proposed mechanism for formation of diastereoisomers.

When we carried out the reaction with enantioenriched boronic ester **1** and enantioenriched lithiated carbamate **2** we were expecting to selectively form a single diastereomeric ate complex **4** which should then rearrange to give the single diastereomer **5**. However, when we carried out this reaction we obtained **5** in only 88:12 *dr*, albeit with perfect *er* (Table 1, entry 1). It was unclear at this point which of the two stereogenic centers was epimerizing, and so further experiments were conducted. Thus, enantioenriched lithiated carbamate **2** was reacted with racemic boronic ester *rac*-1 and *vice versa*. Oxidation and analysis of the secondary alcohol products by chiral HPLC enabled us to map the fate of each stereogenic center individually during the homologation process (see SI). From these experiments we determined that partial racemization had occurred, not in the sensitive organolithium **2** bearing the secondary center which is undergoing significant transformations, but at the static quaternary stereogenic center derived from the boronic ester, leading to the minor diastereoisomer **8**. The mechanism for its formation is shown in Scheme 2b. Following formation of the boronate complex **4**, 1,2-metallate rearrangement will give the major isomer **5**. If this rearrangement is slow, competing fragmentation to the benzylic carbanion **6** can occur. Racemization of **6**, re-addition to boronic ester **7**, and rearrangement then leads to the minor diastereoisomer **8**. In support of this mechanism, boronic ester **7** was also isolated in high *er*.

In an attempt to reduce the undesired fragmentation of ate complex **4** the less hindered neopentyl glycol boronic ester was tested, since related neopentyl boronate complexes have been shown to be less prone to reversibility than the corresponding pinacol boronates.^[3a, 6] However, homologation of neopentyl-**1** gave similar results to the pinacol ester (Table 1, entry 2). As an alternative, we sought to trap the anion **6** as it was formed with an electrophile preventing its readdition to the boronic ester (Table 1, entries 2–5). Of the electrophiles tested allyl bromide proved to be highly effective leading to **5** in high *dr* and *er* (entry 5). The relative stereochemistry of **5** was determined by X-ray crystallography.^[7]

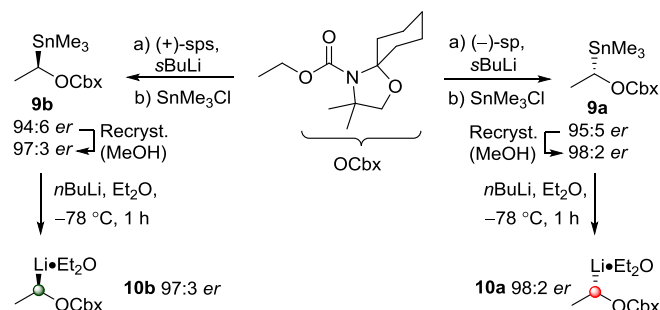
Table 1. Optimization of conditions for the homologation of tertiary boronic ester **1** with **2/10a**.

Entry	Carbamate	Quench	<i>d</i> ^[a]	<i>er</i> ^[b]	Yield ^[c]
1	2		88:12 (5:8)	>99:1	nd
2 ^[d]	2		88:12(5:8)	nd	nd
3	2	MeOH	98:2 (5:ent-8)	>99:1	28
4	2	MgBr ₂ /MeOH	98:2(5:ent-8)	>99:1	22
5	2	AllylBr	98:2 (5:ent-8)	>99:1	48
6	<i>ent</i> - 2 ^[e]	AllylBr	1:99 (5:ent-8)	>99:1	32 ^[f]
7	10a	AllylBr	98:2 (5:ent-8)	>99:1	73

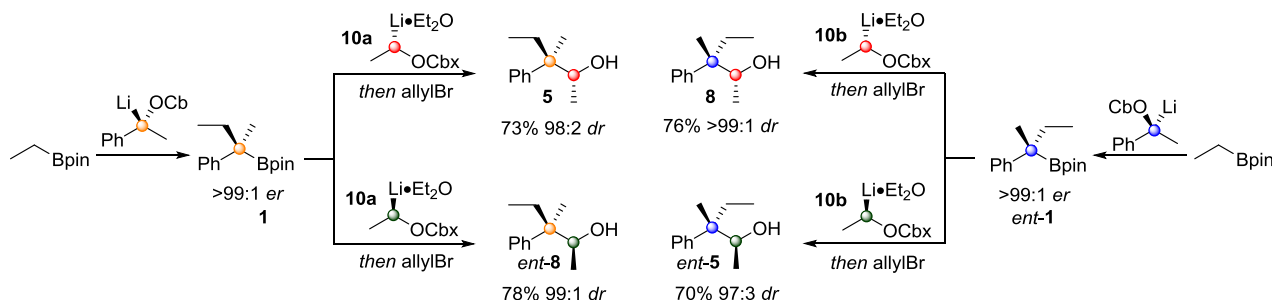
[a] Determined by GCMS [b] Determined by chiral HPLC [c] Isolated yield of **5** [d] Neopentyl glycol boronic ester used [e] (+)-sparteine surrogate used in place of (–)-sparteine [f] Isolated yield of *ent*-**8**

However, the yield was only moderate (48%) and fell further (32%) when we attempted to synthesise the other diastereoisomer of **5** by using O'Brien's (+)-sparteine surrogate [(+)-sps]^[8] in place of (–)-sparteine in the lithiation step (Table 1, entry 6). We reasoned that the bulky diamine was inhibiting the addition process and therefore explored diamine-free conditions [generating the organolithium **10a** via tin–lithium exchange of the corresponding stannane **9a**] in order to make the carbanion less hindered.^[9] This led to a considerably higher yield (73%) (Table 1, entry 7). Stannanes **9a** and **9b** were easily obtained in high *er* as shown in Scheme 3.^[10]

With these optimum conditions we moved on to synthesise the remaining three stereoisomers (Scheme 4). Reaction of the opposite enantiomer of the carbamate **9b** with boronic ester **1** gave the opposite diastereomer *ent*-**8** in 99:1 *dr* and >99:1 *er*. Reaction of the opposite enantiomer of the boronic ester *ent*-**1** with the pair of lithiated carbamates **10a/10b** gave the remaining isomers of the series in good yield and with essentially perfect stereocontrol (Scheme 4). It is interesting to note that even in the mis-matched cases (forming **5** and *ent*-**5**) very high diastereocontrol (>97:3) was still observed.

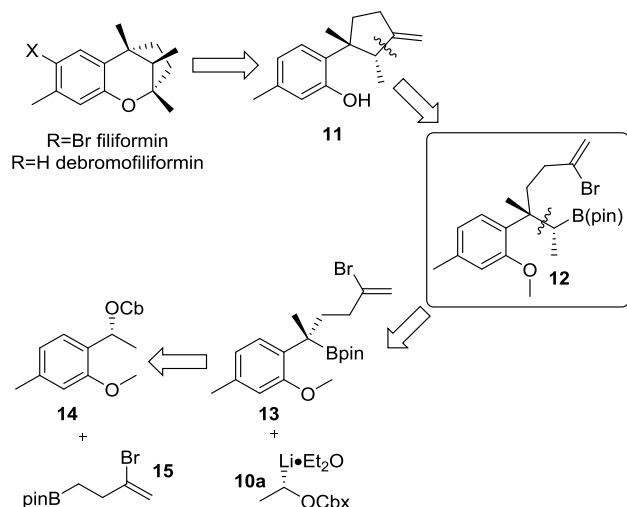


Scheme 3. Preparation of diamine-free lithiated carbamates **10a** and **10b**. (–)-sp = (–)-sparteine, (+)-sps = (+)-sparteine surrogate, OCbx = 3,3-dimethyl-1-oxa-4-azaspiro[4.5]decane-4-carboxylate.



Scheme 4. Homologation of tertiary boronic esters with lithiated carbamates under diamine-free conditions to produce adjacent quaternary-tertiary stereocenters. Reactions were performed on 1 mmol of 1/ent-1 using 1.5 mmol of 10a/10b.

We then sought to apply our methodology to a total synthesis of the sesquiterpene (–)-filiformin. Disconnecting the phenol ether of debromofiliformin leads back to 3-hydroxylaurene (11), which itself could potentially be obtained from an *intramolecular* Zweifel-type olefination of 12 (Scheme 5). This key intermediate could be synthesised using the above methodology through reaction of lithiated carbamate 10a with tertiary boronic ester 13. Boronic ester 13 could in turn be prepared by a lithiation borylation of known carbamate 14 and primary boronic ester 15.



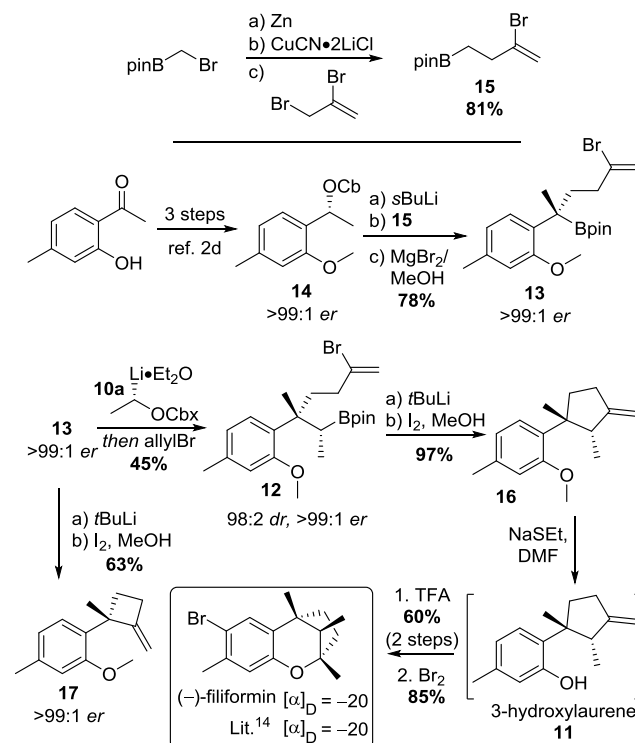
Scheme 5. Retrosynthetic analysis of (–)-filiformin.

Boronic ester 15 was prepared from bromomethyl boronic acid pinacol ester and 2,3-dibromo-1-propene to give 15 in 81% yield using a procedure described by Knochel.^[11] Carbamate 14 was prepared in three steps starting from 2'-hydroxy-4'-methyl acetophenone as previously described.^[2d] The lithiation-borylation of carbamate 14 with boronic ester 15 proceeded smoothly to give tertiary boronic ester 13 in 78% yield with complete enantioselectivity.

Tertiary boronic ester 13 is especially hindered due to the *ortho* methoxy group and the long alkyl chain so formation of the boronate complex was expected to be even more challenging than in the model system. Nevertheless, under our optimized conditions using lithiated carbamate 10a we were able to obtain 12 in 45% yield, 98:2 dr, and perfect *er*.^[12] Using the conditions shown in Table 1,

entry 5, no product was obtained, highlighting the advantages of the diamine-free conditions with especially hindered substrates.

We then sought to perform the *intramolecular* Zweifel-type olefination of boronic ester 12. Addition of *t*BuLi to a solution of 12 in THF at –78 °C followed by addition of I₂ in MeOH gave cyclopentene 16 in 97% yield and 100% *es* (Scheme 6). The exceptionally high yield in this reaction prompted us to explore the more challenging *intramolecular* Zweifel-type olefination of boronic ester 13 as this would lead to a highly strained exomethylene cyclobutane. We were pleased to find that application of the same conditions to 13 gave 17 in 63% yield, again with complete selectivity (Scheme 6).



Scheme 6. Total synthesis of (–)-filiformin.

Deprotection of the methyl ether using NaSEt^[13] gave 3-hydroxylaurene 11 and subsequent addition of catalytic amounts of

TFA^[14] led to clean cyclization to give debromofiliformin as a single diastereoisomer in 60% yield over 2 steps. Finally, bromination completed the synthesis of (–)-filiformin in a total of just 9 steps, 98:2 *dr* and >99:1 *er*. The analytical data was identical to that of the natural (–)-filiformin in all respects.^[14]

In conclusion we have developed lithiation-borylation methodology for the construction of highly challenging quaternary-tertiary motifs in acyclic systems with full control of relative and absolute stereochemistry. Key to success was the use of diamine-free lithiated carbamates to promote the addition step and allyl bromide to quench any benzylic carbanions formed during the 1,2-metallate rearrangement. A unique *intramolecular* Zweifel-type olefination enabled acyclic stereocontrol to be transformed into cyclic stereocontrol. These key steps were applied to the shortest enantioselective synthesis of (–)-filiformin (9 steps), the previous being 19 steps.^[15]

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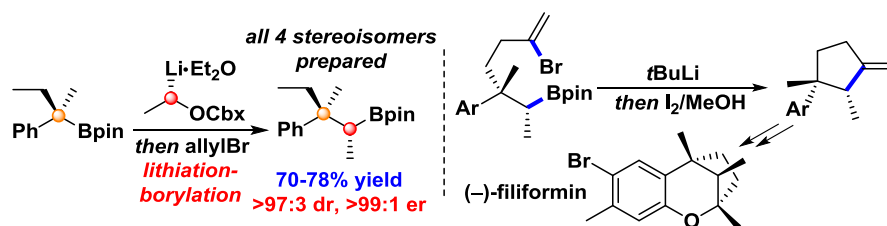
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Stereocontrolled Methodology

Daniel J. Blair, Catherine J. Fletcher,
Katherine M. P. Wheelhouse and
Varinder K. Aggarwal*

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